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BY
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With Letter in Fac-simile.

THE TRADITION OF RAPHAEL IN PERSIA.
BY
MR. C. PURDON CLARKE.
With 4 Coloured Illustrations of Portraits.

RAM SINGH DEL. MAYO SCHOOL OF ART LAHORE

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The Journal of Indian Art and Industry.

LETTER FROM KING JAMES I. OF ENGLAND TO THE SHAH ABBAS OF PERSIA, DATED 14th FEBRUARY, 1622.

The first attempt made by the East India Company to open a trade with Persia dates from 1614, when the Agency at Surat sent Messrs. Steele and Crowther into that country to examine the practicability of the speculation, and what harbours were fit for shipping. Mr. Steele, having described Jask, situated about 90 miles from Ormuz, as a convenient port at which trade might be commenced, he was directed to proceed through Persia, by Aleppo, to England, and was strongly recommended, for his ability and knowledge, to the Court of Directors. A firman having been obtained from the King of Persia for permission to trade at Jask, an expedition was sent thither, towards the end of 1616, under the command of Edward Connok. Thence Connock proceeded to Ispahan, and writing to the Court of Directors under date the 19th January, 1617, he pointed out that Jask was a fit place for a fortification, "which," he added, "I doubt not but from the Sophy to obtain." On the 4th August following he wrote, describing an interview with the King of Persia, on which occasion His Majesty called for wine, and in a large bowl drank His Majesty's (of England) health upon his knee, saying that Connok was welcome, that the King of England should be his elder brother, that "his friendship he did dearly esteem and tender, that he would grant us Jask or any other port we would require, and such freedom in every respect as in his honour he might grant, and all this in the Spanish Agent's presence, to whom he hath neither offered good word nor countenance from that to this hour, but hath graced me with four several presents."

News of this interview quickly reached Goa, accompanied by the additional information that the English contemplated the erection of a fort at Jask. Orders were also shortly afterwards received from Portugal that the English were to be, by all possible means, prevented from trading with Persia, and, in order the better to enforce these instructions, Ruy Frere de Andrade was sent to cruise in the Persian Gulf with a fleet of five galleons.

Mr. Connok was succeeded as Agent at Ispahan by Mr. Barker, and the latter, in 1618, obtained three firmans in favour of the English, and these were followed by a treaty which gave them considerable facilities for trade in Persia. In the following year the agents at Ispahan delivered to the Shah a letter from King James, but of this letter no copy is now extant.

The Portuguese, however, persistently offered every possible obstruction to the English trade in Persia, and, on the arrival, in November 1620, of two of the East India Company's ships (the "Hart" and the "Eagle") at Jask, they found the port blockaded by Ruy Frere's fleet, which being superior in force they were obliged to return to Surat. Here they were joined by the "London" and the "Roebuck"; the combined fleet then returned to Jask, where an indecisive action took place on the 17th December. The Portuguese, however, gave way and allowed the English to enter the port, and then retreated to Ormuz to refit. Shortly afterwards, however, they returned to Jask Roads to renew the action, and another engagement took place on the 28th December, when Ruy Frere's fleet was defeated. During the second engagement Captain Andrew Shilling, who commanded the English fleet, was struck by a shot in the shoulder, from the effects of which he died on the 6th January, 1621.

The Directors of the East India Company had, on several occasions, seriously considered the best means for overcoming the opposition of the Portuguese to their trade in Persia, and at a meeting on the 23rd January, 1622, they decided that letters should be prepared for Persia, "and one procured from the King to the King of Persia that the Company may have better privileges than formerly and more security." The letter, of which a facsimile accompanies, is the one thus procured by the Company. It was duly delivered to His Majesty, who, in reply, sent back two letters to King James, which arrived in England in August, 1624, and were delivered by the Deputy-Chairman and others to the King at Woodstock. I have made enquiries in all likely quarters, but have been unable to ascertain the present existence of either of these letters.

After the engagement with the Portuguese off Jask, the Khan of Shiras threw considerable obstacles in the way of the English carrying on trade in Persia; but this was with the sole object of forcing them into a joint action with the Persians for the expulsion of the Portuguese from the country. To this the English eventually acceded, and ere King James' letter had arrived in Persia, Ormuz had fallen before the combined forces of the English and Persians.

By some means or other this letter of King James to the Shah Abbas found its way into a private collection in Holland, and it was purchased, together with a number of miscellaneous articles, and presented by the purchasers to the Royal Antiquarian Society of Amsterdam. It was deposited for safety in the Royal Museum in that city, where it was pointed out to me by the Director when I visited that Institution in 1893. Upon its being represented to Mr. P. van Eeghen, the distinguished President of the Royal Antiquarian Society, that this letter had no reference, either directly or indirectly, to the Dutch trade in the East, but that it was an excessively interesting document in connection with the proceedings of the late English East India Company, he, with the unanimous assent of his colleagues on the Council of that Society, in the most handsome manner, presented King James' letter to the Secretary of State for India, and it has now found an appropriate resting place in the Archives at the India Office.

Oct., 1896.

F. C. DANVERS.

A TRADITION OF RAPHAEL IN PERSIA.

The histories of many of the various styles of Oriental Art have still to be written, and it is probable that long before any scientific attempt has been made to classify the different branches of the Mohammedan or Saracenic style, another, the most distant and, within a few years of our time, the most hopeless to expect any history of—will be as well known, and its artists' names as familiar as those of our European artists of the last three centuries. This Art is that of the Japanese, which has fortunately found favour whilst the traditions of the great artists are still the every-day talk of their successors.

The Saracenic styles are more varied, having been engrafted upon the national arts of many diverse nations and submitted to influences, which, in many cases, have so changed their ornamentation that they have almost ceased to be recognizable as examples of the pure style shown in the monuments of Cairo.

The most casual observer of Oriental manuscripts cannot have failed to have noticed that, like the change from the Gothic black letter to the Italian forms, the writing of the Arabs and Persians at a somewhat earlier date changed from Cufic, with its stiff upright letters and sharp angles, to the flowing Naskhi, which has been generally adopted throughout the Moslem world, although certain and, perhaps, more barbarous branches of the Mohammedan Tartars in Mongolia and the Arabs of Morocco prefer the early stiff characters in the same manner that some of the Northern nations of Europe still cling to the black letter. A corresponding development in drawing and painting can similarly be traced in European and Saracenic Art. In Europe there was a gradual passage from the flat conventional work of the Byzantine artists, the final change from conventionality to naturalism being attributed to the period of Raphael, but in the East the flat conventional treatment of the Byzantine and Sassanian Empires was succeeded by an equally conventional treatment, which shows Chinese features so strongly marked that it seems to point to an early School located somewhere in Tartary, from whence artists were sent to the Courts of Persia, Turkey, Syria and Egypt. The peculiar work of these artists, in Persia, is known as "Sefaveean," as it is found in its perfection in the monuments, books, manuscripts and woven stuffs which remain to us from the period which terminated with Shah Abbas, the seventh ruler of the Sefaveean dynasty. Then suddenly came the change which so utterly destroyed the spirit of Tartar-Persian Art that no amount of dexterous workmanship could compensate for the violation of principles which had guided the artist through very many generations. This change, from conventionalism to naturalism, can be observed at that time in all the work from the Saracenic countries; but in Persia alone, as far as I am aware, the record of the change is preserved; and to us it is of great interest. Our term "pre-Raphaelite"—applied to works produced before the period of Raphael—can also be used in Persia to distinguish works previous to those of the new departure due to foreign influence. The artists of Ispahan, and of Teheran the more modern capital, are still proud of their descent from certain young painters who were sent by Shah Abbas to study in Rome, and who brought back with them the new ideas which were truly "new wine in old bottles."

Judging by the still numerous evidences of their work, these Persian artists were mere copyists and never attempted to master the principles guiding European Art. They were content to bring back with them careful copies of a few groups of the Holy Family, which at the same time were typical illustrations of the foreign School and also represented the Holy Mother and Child, Miriam and Issa, two popular saints amongst the Shiah Moslems of Persia.

Towards the end of the 17th century, especially in Persian and Indian decorative paintings, can the new departure be seen; and, when the work of a first-class artist, mural paintings rise almost to the level of the art of Giotto, the utmost that the Oriental seems able to attain, even when studying in later and more developed Schools. It is evident, though, that they intended to attain a European standard from the constant use of the name of Raphael, to "paint like Raphael" being a term of praise which Persian artists valued highly.

Of the earlier and pre-Raphaelite style four examples are given in this number, one reproduced from a beautiful drawing, the property of Mr. Charles Read, of the British Museum; and the originals of the other three, a most interesting set of portraits—said to be of Robert and Anthony Shirley, envoys to the Court of Shah Abbas, and of Miriam, the Armenian princess who afterwards became Lady Shirley—are in the collection of Mr. Alfred Morrison, who possesses some of the rarest examples of Saracenic Art. Little description is needed of these drawings. Mongol influence is visible throughout in each of them; the people are distinctly moon-faced, and the Prince, in Mr. Read's drawing, is regarding a hawk, of which a Chinese or even a Japanese artist might be proud.

The three drawings of Mr. Morrison's were placed on fresh Oriental mounts some time in the last century, and bear on their backs inscriptions and stamps of various owners, with details of the sums for which they were purchased; and, what is most valuable, one of the set bears an inscription stating that it was the work of Tarubi Beg and produced in the Library of Kultas Khan, both names being Turkistani and not Persian, although the work was evidently done in Ispahan at the time, or shortly after the time, when the English envoys were resident there.

A curious incident in each of the men's portraits is the accompanying dog, a characteristic touch of nature which would be equally appropriate three centuries later in a modern Oriental drawing of a British Sahib.

A few years since, Colonel Hanna exhibited in London his very valuable collection of old Tartar-Persian portraits, but unfortunately they did not remain long enough in London to allow of a systematic examination or a comparison with similar works which, although exceedingly rare, may possibly be found amongst the Oriental manuscripts in our National Libraries.

This slight account of an interesting phase of Saracenic Art may, it is to be hoped, induce some one with more leisure and opportunities than the writer to study the subject and, especially, to collect, as far as possible, the names of the artists, in order to throw more light upon the early connection between the Arts of Persia and China.

C. PURDON CLARKE.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

42.—Letter from King James I. of England to the Shah Abbas of Persia. 43, 44.—Supposed portraits of the Shirley brothers. 45.—Supposed portrait of Miriam, an Armenian princess, afterwards Lady Shirley. 46.—A Prince and his hawk.

JAMES BY THE

Grace of Almightie GOD, the Creator of Heauen, and Earth, King of great Brittaine, France, and Ireland, Defendor of the Christian Faith, &c.

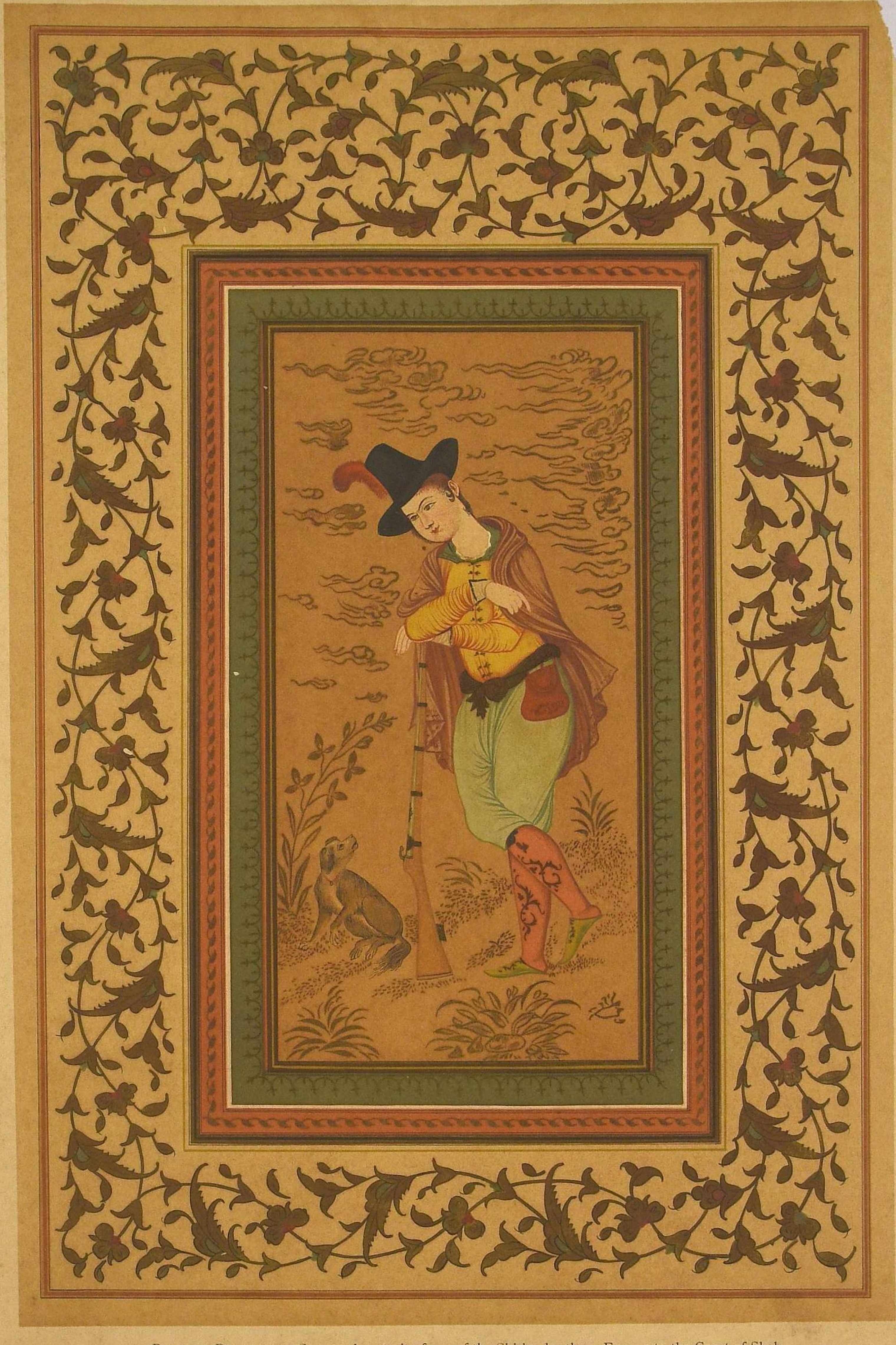
To the high and mightie Monarch, the great Lord Abbas, Emperor of Persia, Media, and Armenia.

High and Mightie Prince: The aduancement of our Subiects good, both at home and abroad, As it is a part of that Charge which Almightie God hath ymposed vpon vs, and is incident to all Soueraigne Kinges and Princes, your Maiestie will not thinke it straunge, if hauing the last yeare interpelled you by our last letters in our Marchants causes which trade into your Dominions and Countries. Wee doe now againe reiterate the same as new occasions doe arise from thence Which giues ympediment and Discouragement to our people in the prosecution of their Trade not only being interrupted by some of your principall Officers in those liberties, and Freedomes, which our Subiects expected to enioy in those parts, and in Conformitie of the fauours and Graunts alreadie afforded by your Maiestie vnto them, but also for want of sufficient Securitie in the Port of Iasques against all attempts by Sea, as of late they haue found by experience, being assaulted by the Portingalls who seeke by indirect meanes, if not to driue our Subiects from all Trade in those parts, at least so to harme and interrupt them in it, as to make them weary of it; And this is the cause why our Marchants are constrayned at this tyme, not so fully and Cheerefully to proceede in their Trade, as otherwise they would be willing to doe, both for their owne and your Subiects good and profitt. Wee doe therfore recommend to yor Princely consideration theis Ouertures, which our Subiects are to present vnto you, for their better securitie at Iasques, or elsewhere, either by building some Fort, or otherwise as your Matie shall hold to be most expedient for them; As also that your Maiestie wilbe pleased to receyue from them these greeuances wherewith their Trade within your Countries is so extreamly burthened, as cannot but tend to their vtter Discouragement, vnlesse your Maiestie be pleased to refourme the same, And especially to afford them free libertie of Trade with all yor Subiects for all Commodities whatsoeuer ymported by them, without lymiting or restrayning the sale of them to any perticuler persons, And that you wilbe pleased to afford them your further fauour that such Marchandizes as our people shall ymport into your Territories, being of the Natiue Commodities of this Land or otherwise may be as profitably Distributed there, as you would expect at our handes the like reciprocation, for the better distributing in theis parte of the Commodities of your Countries. Theis being the principall pointes, in which our Marchants haue humblie besought our Mediation to your Maiestie, to be speedily and fauourablie redressed, as maine Obstacles and ympeaiments to the prosperous settling of their Trade in your Dominions Wee leaue them to your Princely consideration as appertaining both to the weale of yor subiects and ours, and to the Strengthning and Corroborating of our mutuall frendshippe. Giuen at our Pallace of Westminster this fourtenth of Februarie, and in the nyne=teenth yeare of our Raigne of great Brittaine, France, and Ireland.

James R

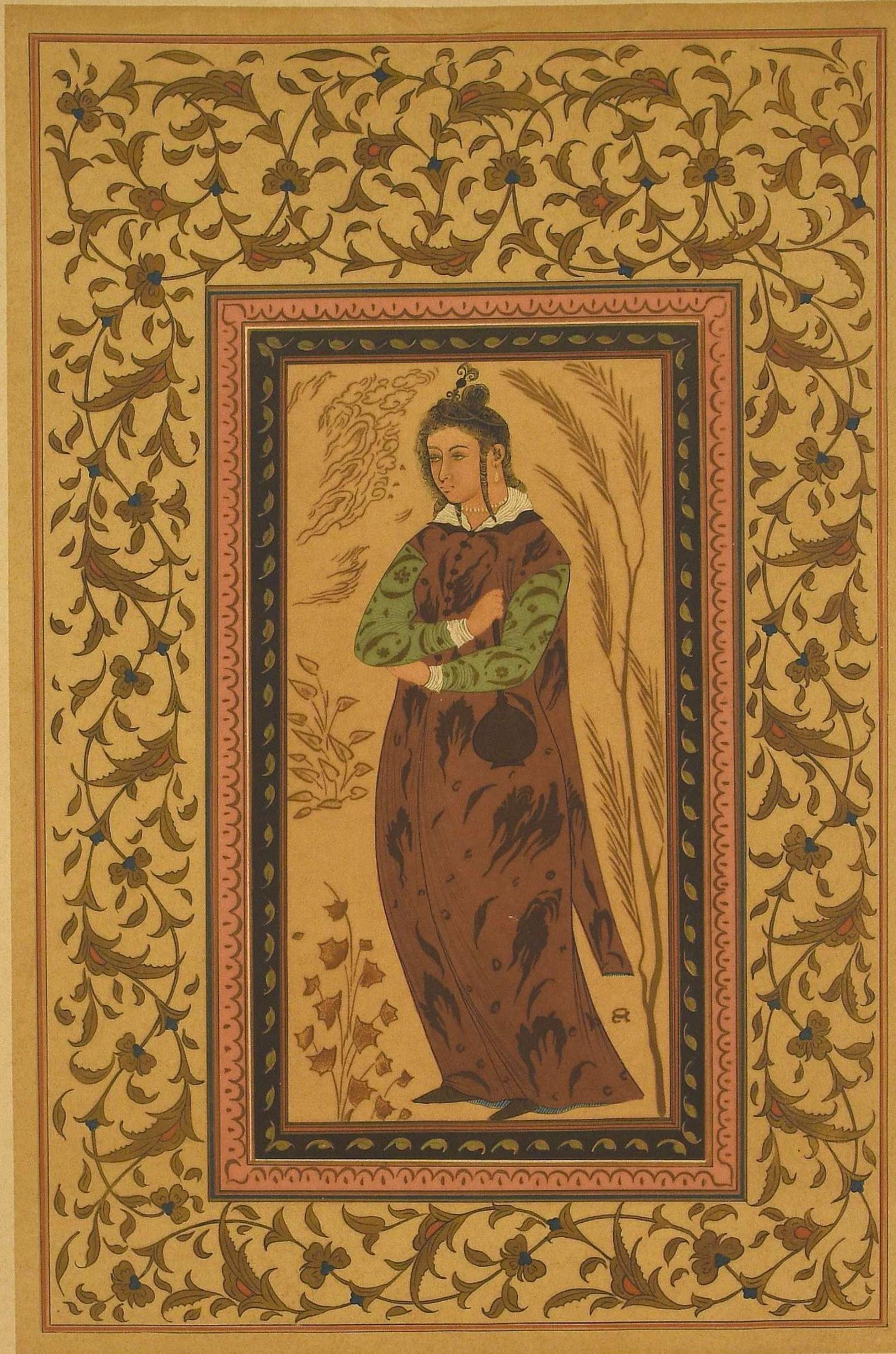
42.—Letter from King James I. of England to the Shah Abbas of Persia, dated 14th February, 1622.

43.—PERSIAN DRAWING. Supposed portrait of one of the Shirley brothers, Envoys to the Court of Shah Abbas. Dated A.D. 1627. By Tarubi Beg, a Turkistani artist of the Court at Ispahan.



44.—PERSIAN DRAWING. Supposed portrait of one of the Shirley brothers, Envoys to the Court of Shah Abbas. Painted about the year 1627 A.D. by Tarubi Beg, a Turkistani artist of the Court at Ispahan.

In the collection of Alfred Morrison, Esq.



45.—PERSIAN DRAWING.

Supposed portrait of Miriam, an Armenian Princess, afterwards Lady Shirley.
Painted about the year 1627 A.D. by Tarubi Beg, a Turkistani artist of the Court at Ispahan.

From the collection of Alfred Morrison, Esq.

46.—PERSIAN DRAWING.

A Prince and his hawk. 16th century.

From the collection of Charles Read, Esq.

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1590.

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Amongst these are suits for the Dukes of Finland and Norfolk; the Earls of Leicester, Sussex, Worcester, &c.; Lord Scrope; Sir John Smith, Sir Henry Lee, Sir C. Hatton, &c.

Special interest attaches to this MS., as it formerly belonged to the Harleian Library, and of the suits of armour therein figured some of the finest are still in existence. Of these the following may be mentioned:—Earl of Pembroke, K.G., now at Wilton; George, Earl of Cumberland, at Hothfield; Sir Christopher Hatton, sold last year from the Spitzer collection for £2080; Sir Henry Lee, K.G., Master of the Armoury to Queen Elizabeth and James I., now in the hall of the Armourers' and Braziers' Company; the Earl of Worcester, in the Tower of London.

Although armour in England was, at the time referred to, fast disappearing from use, the suits shown in the work were all of a high class of workmanship and remarkable for their excellence, no less than interesting as the personal and intimate panoply of some of the brightest stars of the golden age of Elizabeth.

It is hoped that the publication of this unique MS. may lead to the identification of other suits and portions of armour still scattered through the country, and as yet not correctly connected with famous names in English history.

The reproductions will be accompanied by a short note on the MS. and brief notices of the individuals for whom the suits were made.

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OF THE

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"The latest issue of the *Journal of Indian Art and Industry* (W. Griggs, Elm House, Hanover Street, Peckham, London) is devoted to Persian and Indian Bookbindings. The explanatory paper is written by Surgeon Lieut.-Colonel Thomas Holbein Hendley, C.I.E., who says the best specimens of bookbinding that are now made in India come from Ulwar, and are doubtless of Persian origin. There are thirteen page-plates of bindings produced with all the care for which Mr. Griggs has established his reputation. Seven of these are from "The Royal and Historical Bindings from the Royal Library, Windsor Castle"; three are from "Memorials of the Jeypore Exhibition"; and three from "Ulwar and its Art Treasures."—*English Mail.*

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